

# Balanced Literacy Instruction



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# Balanced Literacy Defined

- ◇ Comprehensive approach to language arts instruction.
- ◇ It contains all of the components necessary for students to master written and oral communication.
- ◇ Teacher-directed instruction. Teacher provides systematic and explicit modeling to show students how to use a skill, strategy, or process.
- ◇ Student-centered instruction. Students perform a given task, from which they are expected to learn certain things.
- ◇ The key to effectiveness is DIFFERENTIATION based on needs.

# Balanced Literacy Components

- ◇ Teacher Modeled Reading
- ◇ Daily Independent Reading
- ◇ Guided Instruction in Developmentally Appropriate Books
- ◇ Teacher Modeled Writing
- ◇ Daily Independent Writing
- ◇ Guided Instruction in Developmentally Appropriate Writing
- ◇ Guided and Independent Phonics, Spelling and Etymology

# Branchburg's Components

- ◇ Teacher Modeled Reading – READ ALOUDS
- ◇ Daily Independent Reading – INDEPENDENT READING WORKSHOP
- ◇ Guided Instruction in Developmentally Appropriate Books – GUIDED READING WORKSHOP
- ◇ Teacher Modeled Writing – WRITE ALOUDS
- ◇ Daily Independent Writing – INDEPENDENT WRITING WORKSHOP
- ◇ Guided Instruction in Developmentally Appropriate Writing – GUIDED WRITING WORKSHOP
- ◇ Guided and Independent Phonics, Spelling and Etymology – WORD STUDY

Cooper and Kiger, 2005; Au, Carroll & Scheu, 1997; Freppon & Dahl, 1998; Pressley, 1998; Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998; Strickland, 1994

# Expectations in a Balanced Literacy Program

- ❖ Balanced Literacy is deeply rooted in the belief that teachers should be **CONSTANTLY** aware of students' individual needs and progress.
- ❖ There must be a balance between direct instruction and individual application.
- ❖ Instructional activities must be balanced between a skills emphasis and a meaning emphasis.



# The Role of the Teacher

- ◇ The teacher is a facilitator.
- ◇ The teacher models good habits of readers and writers through focus lessons (mini-lessons).
- ◇ The teacher provides a variety of tasks for students to complete – whole group, small group (cooperative), and individual.
- ◇ The teacher provides opportunities for the student to respond to their reading and writing. Responding is essence of literacy: it is the construction of personal meanings (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1976, 1978).
- ◇ The teacher supports the students with scaffolded instruction through the Gradual Release of Responsibility (Pearson, 1985).
- ◇ The teacher provides a variety of literature and writing experiences – both fiction and nonfiction pieces of literature, as well as narrative and expository writing tasks.

# Modes of Reading – READ ALOUDS

- ◇ Teacher reads text aloud.
- ◇ Students do not have a copy of the text.
- ◇ Models Oral Reading Fluency
- ◇ Models Application of a Reading Strategy
- ◇ Models Effective Writing
- ◇ May be used when the text is too difficult
- ◇ Provides students with background, when it needs to be developed
- ◇ Engages students in fun, fascinating, and fantastic literature
- ◇ Provides exposure to a variety of texts

# Modes of Reading – GUIDED READING

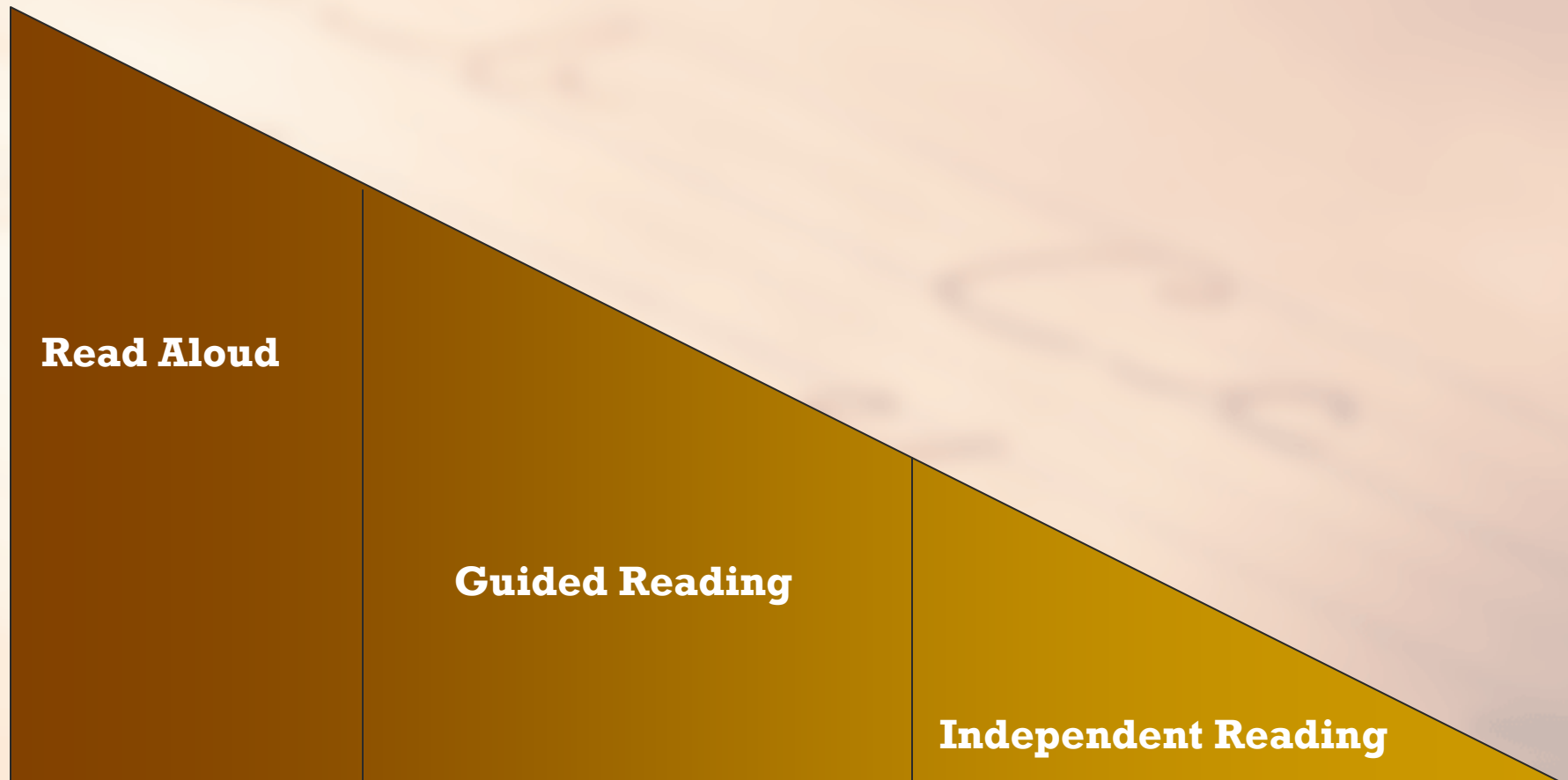
- ❖ Teacher talks, coaches, and walks students through sections of text with questions and student predictions.
- ❖ Teacher provides one-on-one assistance with students' oral reading fluency.
- ❖ Used when text shows a need for much support.
- ❖ Used to instruct students based upon their strengths and weaknesses as readers.
- ❖ Assists in monitoring student reading growth in both comprehension and oral reading fluency.



# Modes of Reading – INDEPENDENT READING

- ❖ Students read text alone, without support, usually silently.
- ❖ Allows students to apply reading strategies at their independent reading level.
- ❖ Used specifically when students are likely to have no difficulty with the text or are highly motivated about the text or text topic.

# Modes of Reading Support



Decreasing Support

Increasing Independence

# Modes of Writing – WRITE ALOUDS

- ◇ Teacher writes aloud with students
- ◇ Teacher uses a chart or overhead, sharing the thinking process being used.
- ◇ Used because students need to have the process of writing modeled for a particular discourse being studied.
- ◇ Used for students to practice revision and editing skills with teacher support and input.

# Modes of Writing – GUIDED WRITING

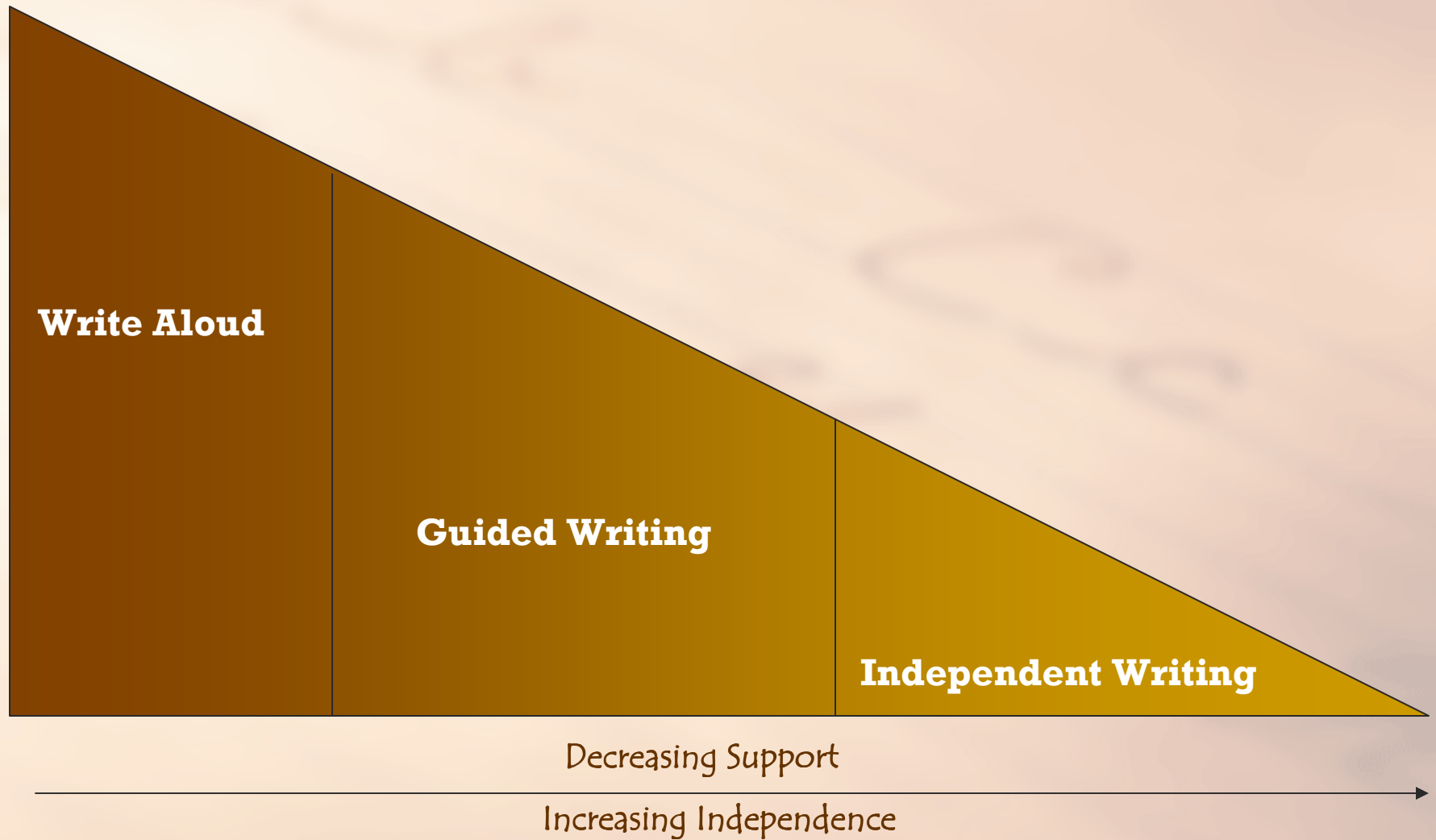
- ◇ Students write their own product.
- ◇ Teacher prompts and guides the students through the product.
- ◇ Used after students have had experience with modeled writing from the teacher.
- ◇ Used to support students in learning how to write their own product following specific expectations.

## Modes of Writing – INDEPENDENT WRITING

- ❖ Students write on their own, usually with their own choice of topics and discourses.
- ❖ Students may need little to no support in the process and creation of a product.
- ❖ Students are writing to express themselves and to find their “niche” within writing.



# Modes of Writing Support



# Assessment Tools

- ◆ Teachers should use a variety!
  - ◆ Teacher observations
  - ◆ Oral Reading Samples
  - ◆ Writing Samples
  - ◆ Portfolios
  - ◆ Open-Ended Assessments

## Learning Conditions

Children must spend time – both inside and outside the classroom – reading and writing under conditions for learning that are favorable for individual achievement.

## Engagement and Motivation

Engagement and motivation are crucial components for children as they learn to read and write. Adults must foster joy in and purposefulness for reading and writing because children will not become proficient in these areas if they do not enjoy the experience or see any value in it.

## LONG RANGE GOAL

Students must be proficient as readers, writers, listeners, and speakers to be successful, contributing adults and lifelong learners.



## The Teacher's Ultimate Role

Teachers must know students individually to provide many kinds of support, enabling them to move to higher levels of reading and writing development.

## What Our Students Deserve

Every child, in every classroom,  
in every school, EVERY DAY,  
deserves a chance to behave like  
and enjoy the pleasure of being a  
good reader, writer, and  
ultimately, communicator.